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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate whether state departments of education still issue a certificate for the role of school supervisor, and, if so, to determine the nature of those certificates. The research will be useful in the debate about whether instructional supervisors should be eliminated. The primary sources of data were the certification regulations for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Most states (n=44) still issued certifications that cover supervisors. Six states had only one generic, all-administrator certificate, and Michigan did not certify administrators. The word "supervisor" was found in the title of the certificate in 30 states. Findings from the study support the continuation of the role of supervisor, as there has been a slight increase in the number of states issuing supervisory certificates since a previous study in 1985. There had been a marked increase in the number of states issuing more than one supervisory certificate (from 2 to 33) in that period. (Contains a chart and 17 references.) (SLD)

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The Status of Supervisory Certification in the 50 States:

Trends and Projections

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Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine whether state departments of education still issue a certificate for the role of school supervisor; and, if so, to determine the nature of those certificates.[1] The practice of supervisors, according to numerous textbooks in the field, focuses on the functions and interrelationships of curriculum, staff development, and classroom visitation (Holland, 1994). This definition represents a mid-range view of this specialty.

This research is useful in the debate about whether instructional supervisors should be eliminated.[2] Of late, even some members of the AERA Special Interest Group: Instructional Supervision, in its 2001 newsletter, as well as recent business meetings have called for the replacement of the term.[3] This research will help determine the viability of the term 'supervisor' in public school certificates.

Perspectives and Significance

The department of education in each state, acting in the public interest, assures that the professional educator will do no harm through the process of certification. Certification is the act of "certifying that one has fulfilled the requirements of and may practice in a field" (Black, 1979, p. 205). A certificate allows a person to pursue a certain occupation, and use a specific title.[4]

While the topic of administrator certification receives limited attention in the educational administration literature, the topic of supervisory certification remains largely ignored.[5] The literature of administrator certification includes articles on the critique of standards, competency testing, individual state analyses, and supply and demand studies. In contrast, the supervision

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[1] This study does not address certificate use.

[2] In some states the question of whether to retain supervisory certification is revisited. For example, in West Virginia some officials of the department of education want to periodically eliminate it, because of a number of reasons. These include the complex mix of declining student enrollment, an administrator shortage, and a state cap on the number of administrators that can be employed. Complicating factors beyond the scope of this paper include the over-supply of certified individuals and the inability to convince them to apply for highly demanding jobs.

[3] The Instructional Supervision SIG was established in 1981 to provide a professional forum, to encourage the development and dissemination of manuscripts, and to maintain interest in, recognition of and support for those who are involved in current research, theory and practice in supervision of instruction. Twenty years later, a task force was established in 2001 to study whether the SIG should change its name because of its "unfortunate connotations." Some believed supervision was "outdated" and should be replaced by "instructional leadership" because it "better captures the nature of theory and practice in the field"(Hazi, 2003). Hazi (2003), Gordon (1997) and Glanz (1997) best capture the current discourse on whether the field should change its name.

[4] With the diversity of job titles used for the public school supervisor, certification as title control has been problematic.

[5] The ERIC database listed 48 articles between 1974-2000 on the topic of administrator certification. The article by Feldvebel (1981) is the only entry that accounted for supervisors.

literature periodically visits certification (e.g., Hazi, 1985; Ogletree, 1967; Richard, 1954; Shafer & Mackenzie, 1965; Sturges, Krajewski, Lovell, McNeill & Ness, 1978;).

In a review of supervisory certification regulations, Hazi (1985) found then that:

- most (41) states had certificates which covered supervisors,
- only 9 states did not recognize the public school supervisor as a certifiable position that warranted coverage and/or its own certificate,
- a few (2) states issued more than one certificate for supervisors,
- more states (24) issued "Supervisory" type certificates (i.e., certificates which include only those responsible for instructional improvement and excludes administrators with titles other than supervisor), than "General Administrative" certificates (i.e., certificates which serve multi-purposes and cover many administrators, including supervisors), and
- more states (18) appeared to prepare supervisors who were generalists, than subject or field specialists.

This study helps to update these earlier findings.

Sources of Data

The primary source of data for this study was the certification regulations of the 50 states (and the District of Columbia) as reported in two sources: 1) the fifth edition of The Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Educational Personnel from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC, 2000), and 2) selected web sites[6] of the respective state departments of education as posted in the fall of 2001.

The questions guiding the inquiry were:

1) How many states certify supervisors?
2) How often does "Supervisor" appear in a certificate title?
3) What are the titles of supervisory certificates?
4) What types of certificates do states issue?
5) What types of supervisory certificates (generalist vs. subject specialist) are issued?
6) Are there any patterns in the titles or types of certificates?

Findings

1) How many states (including the District of Columbia) certify supervisors?
   - Most states (44 or 86% with n=51) issued certificates that cover supervisors.
   - Six states had only one generic, all-administrator certificate (District of Columbia, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, Oregon, Tennessee), while Michigan did not certify administrators.

[6] A web site was used when there was a question about information found in the Manual.

2) How often does "Supervisor" appear in a certificate title?

• The term "supervisor" was found in the title of a certificate in most (30 or 58% of the) states.

• A few times "supervisor" appeared as part of the title of the general administrative certificate, as in Indiana and Utah (Administrative/Supervisory).

3) What are the titles of supervisory certificates?

• States issued over 90 supervisory certificates with titles that were varied. They are listed by state in the Appendix.

• Most states (33 of 44) had more than one supervisory certificate. These certificates included General Supervisor, and other special program or subject areas such as Reading, Special Education, Library Media, Pupil Personnel, or Vocational.

• Besides the word "supervisor" (or administrator), other terms in certificate titles included: Assistant (Maryland), Coordinator (e.g. Kentucky), Director (e.g. Arizona), Curriculum Specialist (Arkansas), Department Chairperson (Connecticut), and Consultant (Connecticut).

• The term "instructional leadership"[7] appeared in certificate titles in only 2 states: Kentucky (Instructional Leader-Supervisor of Instruction K-12), and New Mexico (Instructional Leader K-12). On an interesting note, a New Mexico certification specialist said that the certificate was used "for those who do not want to be traditional administrators" (phone conversation March 27, 2002).

4) What types of certificates do states issue?

• States issued both general and supervisory certificates. Some states (6) issued only the General (i.e., a certificate that is multi-purpose and covers many administrators, including supervisors). A few states (6) offered General supervisory in addition to

[7] The term "Instructional leadership" appeared more in the discourse, than in the titles of administrative certificates. Hallinger (1999) places the concept of instructional leadership into perspective--as an artifact of the school effectiveness research. For policy makers it is "an attractive way to portray the principal," showing the principal to be "highly directive and hands-on." However, he concluded the concept to be "counterproductive" since the principal alone cannot effect change in achievement in the complex and change-unfriendly environment of the schools. Rather, networks of teachers are needed for school improvement. (Hazi citing Hallinger, 1999).

Also noteworthy, Hazi (2002) found that "Instructional Leadership" was in limited use in course titles. She found that "[a] majority (27 or 63%) of the 43 UCEA institutions have at least one course with supervision in its title....Instructional Leadership supplanted a supervision course in 4, supplemented it in 3 and appeared with it in the same course title in 2 institutions" (p.3). Thus, the term "instructional leadership" has been slow to become institutionalized.

supervisory certificates. Still others (2) had General, Supervisory, and those for the jobs of Principal and Superintendent.

5) What types of supervisory certificates (generalist vs. subject specialist) are issued?

• States issued general, special program, and subject area supervisory certificates.

• Grade level supervisory certificates were almost obsolete, except in states such as: Delaware, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New York, and South Carolina. Instead, states specified K-12 or left off grade level identification.

• One interesting finding was the prevalence of supervisory certificates for Library Media (31), Special Education (17 states) and Reading (16 states).

6) Are there any patterns in the titles or types of certificates?[8]

• Most states with supervisory certification were in the east.

• Those states that had only one supervisory certificate were in the western (and generally rural) states: Arizona, Illinois, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.[9]

• Proximity was one trend in the types of certificates offered. States that offered a generic leadership certificate tended to be contiguous, i.e., geographically bounded within a region. These states were those in the West: Oregon, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Kansas, and Nebraska; and in the South: Virginia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

States with multiple supervisory certificates and that differentiated the supervisory certificate from Superintendents and Principals were found in the West: Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Nebraska; in the Middle states: Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia and in the South: Arkansas, Louisiana; Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

The states that offered 3 types of supervisory certificates (general, special, program, or grade level) were clustered in the Northeast and were: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. These northeastern states were also decentralized states.[10]

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[8] The following were used to identify patterns in certification offerings: by NCATE region (4), by Regional Accreditation of secondary schools and colleges (6), and state centralization or decentralization according to Pipho (1991).

[9] New Jersey and Wisconsin are the exceptions as the collective bargaining states.

[10] Pipho (1991) categorizes states by amount of state control: decentralized, moderately decentralized, and centralized. A map of the United States was used to mark the amount of state control according to Pipho and the types of certification offered. Pipho's categorization was only

Conclusions

Should instructional supervisors be eliminated? No, according to this study. The study's findings are a cause of optimism for the future of the role of school supervisor. Instead of finding a cutback or elimination in supervisory certificates, I found the opposite. There was a slight increase in the number of states issuing certificates that cover supervisors (from 41 to 44). States retained supervisory certificates rather than offering generic leadership certificates. While there was an increase in the number of states issuing Generic certificates, these certificates often supplemented, (i.e., were offered in addition to) rather than replaced supervisory certificates. This is surprising since the standards from the Interstate School Leadership Consortium (ISSLC) are for leadership in general with no differentiation of roles for that of the principal, superintendent or central office supervisor.

The most surprising finding was a dramatic increase in the number of states issuing more than one supervisory certificate (from 2 to 33). Similarly, there was an increase in the number of states offering certificates for program and subject area supervisors. This shows a growth--rather than a decline--in supervision specialties.

I was also surprised to find supervisory certificates available in western and rural states, especially in light of declining enrollment and administrator shortages. However, just because a state department makes certificates such as supervisors available, does not mean that individuals apply for, or receive jobs in that capacity. Further research in such states would help identify the prevalence of practitioners with supervisory certificates.

Proximity was another interesting finding. This can be explained, perhaps, as an artifact of certificate reciprocity among the states, and/or of the migration of professionals within regions such as the northeast, the south, and the west.

If the certificate issued by state departments of education is one indicator of the status of supervisors, then the role may still be considered viable in the states. And because of the increases and variations in certificate offerings, supervisory certification appears to be in the demand, rather than in the decline. Future research may show more of the use of these certificates and address questions such as the following: 1) Why does the supervisory certificate survive in most states? 2) Are there plans to eliminate it or change its name? 3) How many are certified as supervisors? 4) What teaching experience and test are required? 5) How have the ISSLC standards affected supervisory certification, if at all?

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useful in helping to explain the northeastern group of states and the variety of supervisory certificates. However, contiguousness of a state helped to understand the remaining pattern.

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State	Generic Leader[1]	Superintendent/Principal[2]	Supervisory Certificates				
			General	Grade Level	Special Program	Subject	Titles
AL	X	X	X		X	X	General Supervisor Supervisor of Reading Supervisor of Spec Ed Supervisor of Teaching Field Sup or Admin of Voc Ed
AK		X	X		X		Supervisor Personnel Services or Curriculum Dir of Special Ed Dir of Vocational Ed
AZ		X	X		X	X	Supervisory Certificate PreK-12
AR		X	X		X	X	Administrator K-12 Supervisor K-12 Curriculum Specialist K-12 Library Media Administrator
CA	X		X			X	Administrative Services Supervision & Coordination Credential
CO		X					
CT		X	X		X	X	Reading Language Art Consultant Dept Chairperson Intermediate Admin & Supervisor
DE		X	X	X	X	X	Supervisor, Elem & Sec Director, Elem & Sec Asst Supt for Curriculum
D.C.	X						
FL	X	X					
GA	X	X	X		X	X	Instructional Supervision Director of Media Centers Dir. of Pupil Personnel Services Director of Special Education Director of Vocational Ed.
HI	X						
ID		X					

[1] A Generic certificate is one that covers multiple administrative roles such as Superintendent and Principal. Titles include: School Administrator (Hawaii), Administrative Services Credential (CA, DC), Educational Leadership (FL,GA), Educational Administration (AL), District or Building Administrator(IN).

[2] Separate Certificates for Administrator include: Superintendent, Principal, District Administrator.

State	Generic Leader[1]	Superintendent/Principal[2]	Supervisory Certificates				
			General	Grade Level	Special Program	Subject	Titles
IL		X	X		X	X	General Supervisory
IN	X						
IA		X					
KS	X				X	X	District Level Administrator Director of Special Ed Supervisor
KY		X	X		X	X	Instructional Leadership-Supervisor of Instruction (K-12) Dir Special Ed Voc. Ed Supervisor/Coord.
LA		X	X		X	X	Parish/ City School Supervisor of Instruction Dir/Sup of Parish/City Spec Ed. Sup of Student Teaching Sup of School Libraries
ME		X	X				Curriculum Coordinator/Instructional Supervisor Dir of Special Ed Dir of Vocational Ed Dir of Adult Ed
MD		X	X		X	X	Assistant in Administration & Supervision Supervisor and Principal Supervisor of: Guidance, Pupil Personnel, Special Ed, Speech Pathologists, Teachers of Hearing Impaired
MA		X	X	X		X	Supervisor/Director Administrator of Spec Ed
MI	None						
MN		X					Director of Special Education Director of Community Education
MS	X						
MO		X					Special Education Administrator Vocational School Director
MT		X	X	X	X	X	Class 3 Administrative Supervisor
NE	X		X	X	X	X	Administrative & Supervisory
NV	X						
NH		X	X		X	X	Assistant Superintendent/Teacher Consultant Special Education Administrator Vocational Director
NJ		X	X		X	X	Supervisor (N-12)

State	Generic Leader[1]	Superintendent/Principal[2]	Supervisory Certificates				
			General	Grade Level	Special Program	Subject	Titles
NM	X		X		X	X	Level 3 Instructional Leader (K-12)
NY	X		X	X	X	X	School Administrator (CO) School Admin & Supervisor (Bldg)
NC		X	X		X		Curr & Instruc Specialist Spec Ed Prog Administrator Instr Technology Specialties Media Supervisor
ND		X					
OH		X	X		X		General Supervisor Vocational Supervisor Educational/Administrative Specialist
OK		X					
OR	X						
PA		X	X		X	X	Supervisor of Curriculum&Instruction (District-wide) Admin of Special Ed Guidance Supervisor Special Subjects Supervisor Reading Supervisor/Director
RI		X	X		X	X	Special Subjects Administrator Admin of Curriculum/Instruction Administrator of Special Education Guidance Supervisor Reading Supervisor
SC		X		X			Elementary Princ/Supervisor Secondary Princ/Supervisor
SD		X			X		Curriculum Director Special Ed Director
TN	X						
TX		X	X		X		Supervisor Special Education Supervisor Vocational Supervisor Mid-Management Administrator
UT	X						Administrative/Supervisory
VT		X			X		Coordinator of Special Education Area Vocational Director
VA	X		X				Admin & Supervision PreK-12
WA		X			X	X	Program Administrator

State	Generic Leader[1]	Superintendent/Principal[2]	Supervisory Certificates				
			General	Grade Level	Special Program	Subject	Titles
WV		X	X		X		Gen Supervisor of Instruction (K-12) Vocational Administrator (5-Adult)
WI		X	X		X		Director of Instruction
WY		X			X	X	Director, Coord, Supervisor (K-12)

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